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CLAIMS

1. Process for the reduction of alcohol content  
5 of beverages which is performed in a circuit with the following stages:

- a. circulation of the beverage from a feed tank, pressurized at maximum 40 bar, tangentially to a NF membrane to obtain two streams:
  - 10 i. one of retentate that does not cross the membrane,
  - ii. one of permeate that crosses the membrane and is composed of water, ethanol and some salts;
- 15 b. recombination of the retentate in the feed tank with the beverage to be processed;
- c. distillation of the retentate, at atmospheric or reduced pressure, leading to a top stream rich in ethanol and a bottom stream of dealcoholized
- 20 permeate;
- d. recombination of the dealcoholized permeate in the feed tank with the retentate/beverage;
- e. total or partial compensation of the volume loss due to the removal of ethanol by the addition of
- 25 purified water.

2. Process in accordance with claim 1 wherein the membranes are adjusted to allow selective permeation of ionic species according to their charge.

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3. Process in accordance with claims 1 to 2 wherein the ionic species can be total or partial removed from the dealcoholized permeate (1.c).

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4. Process in accordance with claims 1 to 3 wherein the membranes are regenerated, with 90% minimum flux recovery, by tangential circulation of water at room temperature.

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5. Process in accordance with claims 1 to 3 wherein the membranes are regenerated, with 90% minimum flux recovery, by tangential circulation of water at a temperature of 50-60 °C.

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6. Process in accordance with claims 1 to 3 wherein the membranes are regenerated, with 90% minimum flux recovery, by tangential circulation aqueous solutions of weak bases, with controlled pH between 8 and 11, depending on cleaning time.

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7. Process in accordance with claim 6 wherein a pH between 8 and 9 for long cleaning is used.

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8. Process in accordance with the previous claims wherein the operation is carried out in continuous or batch mode.

9. Process in accordance with the previous

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claims wherein the final product is obtained by the mixture of the original beverage with beverage treated by this process.

5           10. Process in accordance with the previous claims wherein the final product presents the same organoleptic characteristics as the original beverage, namely body, flavour, aromatic intensity and aromatic profile.

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11. Use of the process described in the previous claims for the reduction or removal of ethanol from beverages such as wine, beer, cider, mead and sake.